

# USC Marshall

School of Business

## BOARD OF LEADERS

December 4, 2018

Dr. Wanda M. Austin  
Interim President  
University of Southern California  
University Park Campus  
Los Angeles, CA 90089

*VIA EMAIL and HAND DELIVERY*

The Board of Trustees  
c/o Mr. Rick Caruso, Chairman  
University of Southern California  
University Park Campus  
Los Angeles, CA 90089

SUBJECT: James G. Ellis, Dean of the USC Marshall School of Business

Madam Interim President and Trustees,

The USC Marshall Board of Leaders is comprised of 116 proven, highly accomplished and widely respected business executives, founders and leaders drawn from across the spectrum of American commerce, with expertise in every discipline required for enterprise success. Its members, and the businesses they lead, span the nation and the globe and many BoL members simultaneously serve the University in informal and/or formal roles, contributing a deep and experienced perspective to the Business School, and the University, overall. The Board of Leaders exists to provide practical, external, timely and wide-ranging input, feedback and, if necessary, – criticism – to the Office of the Dean concerning any programs, practices, curriculum, initiatives, or other matters of importance to USC Marshall. It also serves as an important, informal communications vehicle for Marshall, so that current facts and information about the School are fairly disseminated throughout the business world.

The USC Marshall Board of Leaders stands unanimously in objection to the early termination of Jim Ellis, Dean of the Marshall School, and requests the Board of Trustees to immediately intercede and rescind the Interim President's misguided decision, and to further act immediately to restore required transparency, fairness, due process and the essential disciplines of best practices to the Office of the President.

Dean Ellis' academic and executive leadership at USC Marshall, and during his tenure at the University overall, has been remarkable. He has driven the Business School's performance – at both the graduate and undergraduate levels – to the highest metrics across all spectrums since it was founded. He has been a visionary leader in developing important new, innovative programs, initiatives and research platforms. Moreover, he has been an unflinching advocate – always leading by example – for diversity, inclusion, social awareness, respect and ensuring that the ethos of “*doing well by doing good*” is a hallmark of USC Marshall and its faculty, staff and graduates. Simply said, Jim Ellis has been an extraordinary, widely respected and admired leader across all stakeholder groups at USC Marshall... and beyond.

We respectfully request each Trustee to immediately engage to correct this executive misjudgment and opaque process. Failure to do so will cause irreparable harm to the prospects and trajectory of USC Marshall School of Business and all its constituents.

On behalf of the USC Marshall Board of Leaders,



Gregory R. Hillgren  
Vice-Chairperson  
USC Marshall Board of Leaders